FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Access Improvements and Land Bridge Construction

Introduction

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (Fort Vancouver NHS) is located along the north shore of the Columbia River adjacent to the City of Vancouver in Clark County, Washington. This proposal is a cooperative undertaking by the NPS, City of Vancouver, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), and the Confluence Project. The project will commemorate the Lewis & Clark bicentennial, while improving trail connections within the Vancouver National Historic Reserve.

Purpose and Need

The proposed project is to allow partner agencies to construct the land bridge on NPS managed lands. The purpose of the project is to:

1. Commemorate the bicentennial of the journey of Lewis and Clark.
2. Improve the visitor experience by reconnecting upland Fort Vancouver NHS to the historic Columbia Riverfront Landing by providing panoramic viewpoints over the relatively flat landscape and interpreting the historic relationship including the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Oregon National Historic Trail.
3. Provide a safe and pleasant means for pedestrians and bicycles to cross over SR-14 and improve trail connections between the Discovery Trail and the Columbia Riverfront Trail.
4. Meet Department of the Interior commitments with the Federal Department of Transportation to cooperatively develop programs improving visitor access to the national parks while preserving and protecting ecologica1 systems and ensuring a high quality visitor experience (Memorandum of Understanding, November 25, 1997).
5. Implement actions included in the *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (GMP/EIS) completed in 2003.

The proposed project is needed to reconnect Fort Vancouver NHS, the Vancouver National Historic Reserve (Vancouver NHS), and the City of Vancouver to the approximately 20 acres comprising the historic Columbia River waterfront. SR-14, constructed in the late 1970s' early 1980s', created an impassable barrier for pedestrians and cyclists between the reconstructed Fort, and Old Apple Tree Park and the Columbia River. The Columbia River was instrumental to the success of the Fort Vancouver, furnishing food, resources, and the providing the avenue for commerce that led to the success of the Fort. Currently no visual or physical connection between the Fort and the River exists. The proposal will provide a physical link reflecting the shared history and improving visitor experience through interpretation, recreation, and appreciation. It is anticipated the bridge connection will increase park visitation (the Fort currently receives 70-80,000 visitors per year: the remainder of the NHS including the waterfront receives over 500,000 visitors per year). In addition, the link will provide an ADA (American with Disabilities Act) accessible trail between the Fort and the accessible ramps and paths at the Riverfront.

The land bridge will also serve as a critical link between the approximately ten mile City of Vancouver trail system along the Columbia River and the two-mile long Discovery Trail that winds through Fort Vancouver NHS, Vancouver NHR and the surrounding upland Vancouver neighborhoods. The NPS is a partner with the City of Vancouver in developing the Discovery Trail within the park because it provides park visitors with a critical, non-motorized connection between the fort and village areas of the park.

NPS planning efforts have identified the need for a connection between Fort Vancouver and the Columbia River waterfront. The 2003 GMP/EIS also calls for interpretive improvements along the Columbia River waterfront to interpret the waterfront activities of the Hudson's Bay Company operations which the public would access via the land bridge. This connection is desired and supported by both WSDOT and the City of Vancouver as a means to safely get the public across a busy four lane freeway and railroad. The land bridge concept was selected over a conventional pedestrian overpass so that landscape elements, interpretive displays, and spectacular viewing opportunities could be incorporated. The concept of a crossing has been discussed and supported by NPS, City of Vancouver, WSDOT and FHWA for over 20 years. A non-motorized overpass was proposed over 10 years ago as mitigation for construction for SR-14/Interstate 5 (I-5) interchange by WSDOT. The land bridge concept was well received during public review and comment held in conjunction with the GMP/EIS and reflects the Secretary of the Department of Interior four "Cs" philosophy of conservation through communication, consultation, and cooperation.

Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative is the same as proposed in the Preferred Alternative in the EA, with **no** changes or modifications following release of the Environmental Assessment. In the Selected Alternative, NPS will allow the City of Vancouver and WSDOT to construct and maintain a pedestrian and bicycle land bridge on Fort Vancouver NHS, including construction of the north landing of the land bridge on Fort Vancouver NHS, access across Fort Vancouver NHS necessary to maintain the structure, and the construction of trail improvements on Fort Vancouver NHS to access the structure. The south landing of the land bridge would be built by the City of Vancouver and WSDOT in WSDOT's right of way, and the north landing, connecting paths, and approach fills on NPS lands. Maintenance of the land bridge, landscaping, irrigation, and lighting will be the responsibility of the City of Vancouver. The NPS would not be responsible for the funding or maintenance of the land bridge.

In order to construct and maintain that portion of the Vancouver Land Bridge and related support structures on National Park Service managed Federal lands within Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the Secretary of the Interior will convey a Right of Way Easement Deed to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation who will in turn assign it to the Washington State Department of Transportation for implementation. This action will be done in full accord with 36 CFR, part 14(D).

The land bridge is a proposed bicycle and pedestrian bridge with a hard-surface trail, bridging SR-14 with a fully accessible path and landing. The width of the structure (40-feet) allows for landscape plantings to visually screen pedestrian and bicycle visitors from the vehicle traffic below. The height of the bridge above the surrounding landscape would give visitors an excellent panoramic view of the Fort and its relationship to the Columbia River. Near each end

of the land bridge, widened overlooks would be provided along with wayside interpretive exhibits. Unlike a typical caged pedestrian bridge over a freeway, the proposed land bridge would be a graceful structure that incorporates a meandering path, extensive landscaping, view points for interpretation, and low level lighting.

The proposed structure would include a circular ramp on Fort Vancouver NHS property that would elevate the pedestrian/bicycle crossing about 25 feet above SR-14 at the north abutment. Another ramp on the south side would be constructed at Old Apple Tree Park to elevate the bridge crossing to 23 feet above SR-14 at the south abutment. Construction would include grading, draining, surfacing, paving, and landscaping. The structure would be 40 feet in width and a meandering pathway, approximately 10 to 14 feet wide, would be flanked by landscaping.

To connect the land bridge to the Columbia Riverfront, the design includes construction of a path tying the south abutment to Old Apple Tree Park and from there visitors can use an existing underpass beneath the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway to access the river. The path would be approximately 10-14 feet wide and include landscaping, using vegetation to screen the railroad and freeway.

The proposal is a cooperative undertaking by the NPS, City of Vancouver, WSDOT, FHWA, and the Confluence Project. The City of Vancouver is the lead agency for the proposed design and environmental work associated with that portion of the work within the WSDOT right-of-way. NPS provided the environmental review and archeological investigations for the project. The Confluence Project, a non-profit organization established to manage a number of projects between Clarkston, WA and the Pacific Ocean along the Columbia and Snake Rivers commemorating the bi-centennial of the journey of Lewis and Clark, is providing financial and project management assistance for the project.

Construction is proposed to begin in fall 2005 and is projected to last 12 to 18 months. Potential ground-disturbing activities associated with the project could include:

- Geotechnical subsurface explorations for planning purposes
- Excavation of holes for piers or footings to support the bridge
- Grading, draining, and filling to construct trails and ramps up to the bridge
- Surfacing the structure
- Trenching for electric utilities and installation of trail lighting
- The removal of vegetation, grading, and the introduction of landscaping including the possible excavation of trenches for irrigation systems
- Establishment of a staging area for vehicles and equipment

The land bridge project area is approximately 8.5 acres (3.4 ha), extending east from the eastern edge of Old Apple Tree Park (managed by the City of Vancouver), over the railroad and SR-14, to Fort Vancouver NHS. The north abutment of the land bridge is situated along the outer edge of the historic Kanaka Village site and connects with the planned Discovery Loop Trail segment.

In addition to ground disturbance, the highways that serve the area would be used to transport building materials and to remove construction debris from the jobsite. Trucks would arrive at the

site from both the eastbound and westbound direction of SR-14 and may carry heavy equipment, building material, fill material, or debris. During construction, approximately 550 to 600 truck trips would be needed to deliver the estimated 11,000 to 12,000 cubic yards of fill material (20 cubic yards per truck). The trucks will likely pull directly off eastbound SR-14 onto an existing path to enter the construction site. The borrow source of the fill material has not yet been identified. In addition, building material, like steel, concrete, and planting material would be delivered to the site adding an estimated 500 truck trips to the area.

The staging area for the project would be adjacent to the proposed construction site on the north side of SR-14. The area would be up to five acres in size and covered with a geotextile fabric and gravel to prevent ground disturbance. Post construction the area would be revegetated as needed to restore the grass. In addition, staging areas would also include approximately two acres of NPS property south of the BNSF Railroad right-of-way and between Columbia Way, and one acre of paved area at the northeast corner of Kanaka Village, south of the army barracks known as the "bone yard". The bone yard is currently used by the NPS for storage of fencing and pathway materials. Staging areas would be fenced with temporary construction fencing to control vehicular access and prevent disturbance of other areas. A construction access road would be maintained along the east side of Kanaka Village in the alignment of the historic north-south roadway, turning east at the army barracks and following the alignment of the Discovery Loop trail. After construction is complete, the construction access road would be surfaced and used as the permanent pathway.

The Selected Alternative also includes measures to protect water quality during and after construction. During construction, standard best management practices would be implemented to reduce the potential for storm water pollution (see Resource Protection Measures). In addition, the Selected Alternative includes a storage tank located in the land bridge abutment that will capture storm water for later irrigation use. An irrigation well would also be drilled at the site to water the plantings on the land bridge during the dry season.

Alternatives Considered

Under the No Action Alternative, the status quo would be maintained and NPS would not allow for the construction identified under the Selected Alternative. It is likely that the land bridge and trail improvements would not be constructed on NPS managed land and the project would be canceled or moved to a different location.

Tunneling underneath SR-14 was considered but rejected, because of the cost and engineering challenges presented by the high water content in the soil and the impacts to the environment, including potential impacts to archeological resources and traffic impacts from moving and disposing large quantities of soil. Tunneling would also be below the 100-year flood elevation and could be affected by periodic flooding. Additionally, tunneling does not meet the project objectives, such as improving Visitor Experience, and conflicts with NPS planning documents, like the GMP/EIS.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The environmentally Preferred Alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, which is guided by the Council on

Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ (46 FR 18026 - 46 FR 18038) provides direction that "[t]he environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101", which considers:

1. fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. assuring for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
3. attaining the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
4. preserving important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintaining, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
5. achieving a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
6. Enhancing the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources (NEPA Section 101(b)).

The Council on Environmental Quality states that the environmentally preferable alternative is "the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources (46 FR 18026 – 46 FR 18038)." Through identification of the environmentally Preferred Alternative, the NPS decision-makers and the public are clearly faced with the relative merits of choices and must clearly state through the decision-making process the values and policies used in reaching final decisions.

In this case, the Selected Alternative is clearly consistent with NEPA criteria two, three, and five, in particular providing a "safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings" for NPS visitors. In addition, it is arguably consistent with criteria one, in fulfilling trustee responsibilities in managing the environment because the project repairs a historic connection between Fort Vancouver NHS, Vancouver NHR, and the City of Vancouver with the Columbia River.

There are, however potential adverse impacts to archeological resources that are directly addressed in NEPA criteria four. Although unlikely, NPS decision-makers are aware that construction of this project could involve the unearthing of archeological resources and potentially human remains. Measures are included in the project to protect archeological resources and to recover artifacts to benefit our understanding of the development of the Pacific Northwest for future generations.

The No Action Alternative is less environmentally preferred because it fails to address on-going issues and misses an opportunity to enhance the environment. The No Action alternative does not meet NEPA guidelines two, three, and five because it fails to address the lack of a connection between the Vancouver NHR and the Columbia River and ignores an opportunity to enhance the surroundings. On balance, due to beneficial impacts to visitor experience and the restoration of a

historic connection, it appears the Selected Alternative best meets the criteria for the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

Why the Selected Alternative Will Not Have A Significant Effect On The Human Environment
The NPS used the NEPA criteria to evaluate whether the selected action would have a significant impact on the environment.

NEPA Criteria	Selected Action
Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an EIS	Whether taken individually or as a whole the impacts of the project do not reach the level of significance. The short-term local construction impacts to geologic resources and geohazards, park operations, and water resources are negligible to minor. The impacts to cultural resources, including the archeological resources and the historic landscape are expected to be minor to moderate and will be monitored and mitigated throughout construction.
The degree to which public health and safety are affected	In the short term, mitigation is included to reduce the risk of construction on visitors and vehicle traffic. Measures such as fencing and closures would be part of an Accident Prevention Plan to help protect health and safety. In the long term, the structure is designed for seismic safety, reducing the potential for failure in an earthquake and reducing impacts to local direct and possibly cumulative long term minor and adverse.
Any unique characteristics of the area	Fort Vancouver NHS is rich with history and the archeological resources of the area are of great importance on a regional level to the history of the Pacific Northwest. There is the potential for direct and cumulative long-term moderate adverse impact to one archeological site listed on the National Register, including disturbance during construction or buried permanently by fill material. Stipulations of the MOA completed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will result in additional identification of archeological resources and in mitigation of adverse impacts related to construction.
The degree to which the impacts are likely to be highly controversial	The project and impact analysis has not been controversial. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe took issue with the amount of information presented in the Archeological Report and to a lesser degree the EA, but did not object to the analysis (see Consultation and Coordination). Pearson Airfield representatives expressed some reservations about the potential for visitors on the airfield, but in general supported the project.

NEPA Criteria	Selected Action
The degree to which the potential impacts are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks	Generally, the impacts are well defined and analyzed in the EA. However, construction in an archeologically sensitive area does include an element of risk. Measures have been taken to reduce the risk including surveys and mitigations developed with the assistance of the SHPO, yet construction could impact archeological resources.
Whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration	This project commemorates the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition. It is unlikely that such an undertaking will occur again at Fort Vancouver NHS for an extended period of time.
Whether the action is related to other actions that may have individual insignificant impacts but cumulatively significant effects. .	A cumulative analysis was completed for each impact topic discussed in the EA. The selected action could result in additive effects to cultural resources, aesthetics, geohazards, and water quality. The future I-5 bridge crossing project along with the land bridge project could result in cumulative impacts to cultural resources that reach the moderate level.
The degree to which the action may adversely affect historic properties in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other significant scientific, archaeological, or cultural resources.	The selected alternative may result in local to regional direct and potential cumulative long-term moderate adverse impact to one archeological site listed on the National Register. Archeological resources could be affected during ground disturbing activities associated with construction or buried permanently by fill material. Stipulations of the MOA completed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would result in identification of archeological resources and in mitigation of adverse impacts related to construction.
The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat.	The project area is in an urban setting. Surveys indicate that the project area does not retain threatened or endangered species or habitat. The edge of the project area is approximately 400 feet from the Columbia River that contains sensitive fish species. Mitigation Measures will be employed to prevent storm water runoff from discharging into the river and impacting fish.
Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.	The selected action does not threaten to violate environmental laws.

RESOURCE PROTECTION MEASURES

Under the Selected Alternative, best management practices and mitigation measures will be used to prevent or minimize potential adverse effects associated with the project. These practices and measures would be incorporated into the project construction documents and plans. Resource protection measures undertaken during project implementation would include, but would not be limited to, those listed below.

Resource Protection Measures

Resource Topic	Mitigation
Cultural Resources	1. The Selected Alternative includes a Memorandum of Agreement with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer defines mitigation measures. 2. Archeological resources would be investigated, excavated, tested, documented, protected, and evaluated prior to ground disturbing activities. 3. The National Park Service would continue to consult with affiliated and interested tribes throughout the planning process to avoid impacts to traditional cultural properties. 4. A meeting would be held with the park archeologist to discuss the area's archeological resources, clarify construction schedules, and establish a plan for archeological monitoring of ground-disturbing site work, including: • Clearing • Topsoil removal • Structure or trench excavation • Landscaping • Construction of temporary facilities 5. To reduce unauthorized collecting from areas: • Construction personnel would be educated about the need to protect cultural resources encountered. • Instructions would be given regarding notification of the appropriate personnel if human remains were discovered. • Work crews would be instructed of the illegality of collecting artifacts on federal lands (Archeological Resources Protection Act). 6. If prehistoric or historic archeological resources are discovered during any portion of the proposed

Resource Topic	Mitigation
	action, work in the area associated with the find would cease until evaluated by the park archeologist or designated representative, and procedures outlined in 36 CFR 800 would be followed, potentially including relocation of the work to a non-sensitive area to avoid further disturbance to the site until the significance of the find can be evaluated. 7. Discovered resources would be evaluated for their potential National Register of Historic Places significance, and, if needed, mitigation measures would be developed in consultation with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, such as changes in project design and/or archeological monitoring of the project and data recovery conducted by an archeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's standards. **Responsibility: Construction Management Team (City of Vancouver/WDOT Construction Lead and NPS Cultural Resources staff)**
Transportation and Circulation	1. A Traffic Management Plan would be prepared to address lane closures, vehicle safety, and access and egress from the construction site. **Responsibility: Construction Management Team (City of Vancouver/WDOT Construction Lead)**
Visitor Experience	1. The Fort palisade and Visitor Center would not be closed during construction. 2. Local newspapers, the Park's newsletter, the park's website, and visitor center would include updated information regarding closures or access restrictions during construction and demolition. 3. Specific provisions would be followed, to minimize adverse effects on visitors: • The majority of material deliveries would be made and disruptive work would be done during the week, rather than on weekends or holidays. • The contractor would be encouraged to deliver the majority of materials in the early morning hours (before 10:00 a.m.). • Paved areas used by vehicular and pedestrian traffic would be swept and kept clean of construction debris and soils, as necessary. 4. To ensure visitor safety, an accident prevention plan, including a job hazard analysis for each major phase of the proposed project would be a required. The plan would include: • Site conditions

Resource Topic	Mitigation
	• Required project inspections and safety meetings. • Fire Prevention • Visitor Safety 5. Visitor safety would be ensured day and night by fencing of the construction limits of the proposed action. Trucks hauling demolition debris and other loose materials that could spill onto paved surfaces would be covered or would maintain adequate freeboard. 6. The use of hazardous materials would be approved in advance, including and analysis of explosive, flammable, poisonous, corrosive, oxidizing, or irritating substances (relative to safe storage and use). **Responsibility: Construction Management Team (City of Vancouver/WDOT and NPS Public Relations)**
Water Resources	1. It is likely that a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be required under Phase II of the National Pollution Elimination Discharge System requirements of the Clean Water Act. The plan would include measures to prevent soil from eroding and depositing into water sources, including but not limited to: • Storing topsoil surrounded by silt fencing and overtopped by semi-permeable matting anchored together to prevent siltation from heavy runoff during rainstorms. • Adequate erosion control or drainage structures would be installed and maintained. • An adequate hydrocarbon spill containment system would be available on site in case of unexpected spills in the project area. • Management of fuels, oils, solvents, and chemicals used in construction operations and maintenance. • Management of solid waste products determined to be a hazard by the Department of Ecology. • Maintenance and management of contaminated soils and water encountered or inadvertently generated during construction. **Responsibility: Construction Management Team (City of Vancouver/WDOT Construction Lead)**

Consultation & Coordination
Scoping was conducted to inform the public of the proposed project and identify potential environmental issues. In February 2004, NPS staff mailed a scoping letter to interested individuals, organizations and agencies. The letter included a brief description of the project, a project area map, and included scoping period and public meeting date. The public scoping meeting was held March 2, 2004 in Vancouver, WA. A newspaper article that included the meeting date and time was printed in The Columbian newspaper on February 7, 2004 and about 15 members of the public attended the public scoping meeting that was broadcast on local access TV. An opinion piece about the project was included in the March 3, 2004 edition of the paper and another was included in the paper on March 17, 2005. In addition, NPS sent specific scoping letters to interested agencies, including the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

From scoping, NPS received 10 letters, including five from individuals, four from agencies, and one from the Spokane Tribe of Indians.

- The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) summarized "Our concerns with the project are the protection of airspace for safe aircraft flight, and the safety of people on the ground in close proximity to runways and their approaches." The project team has worked with the FAA during design to propose a structure that would not compromise aircraft safety and is preparing the necessary plans for FAA concurrence, including permit #7460.
- The Spokane Tribe of Indians recommended the project proceed cautiously and that archeological survey information be provided. The project team provided the survey results to the Spokane Tribe of Indians.
- The Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife each provided information about sensitive species in the project vicinity. This information was evaluated when preparing the analysis.
- The National Park Service, National Trails System Office requested the EA include information concerning the Lewis and Clark National Trail and the Oregon National Trail. Information was added to the EA.
- Letters from individuals expressed concern over a potential increase in off-leash dog-walking due to the project, separation of bicycles and pedestrians on the path structure, concerns over maintenance and opposition over the use government funds for this project, and suggestions for moving Police and Federal Highways Administrative buildings out of the Reserve for historic restoration. The issues were addressed in the EA.

Notice of the EA was mailed to interested individuals, groups, and agencies (about 700 notices), about 100 paper copies of the EA were mailed, and it was posted on the park website at: http://www.nps.gov/fova/pphtml/news.html . The public meeting for the EA was held on June 15, 2005 and was announced with a press release and was included in the local newspapers. Public comment lasted 45 days from the distribution of the EA (May 26, 2005 to July 6, 2005) and comments were accepted at the meeting, by mail, or via email.

Seven members of the public attended the meeting asking questions about the project, including schedule, accessibility, construction, and design. No substantive environmental issues were raised during the meeting. NPS received two emails and two letters related to the project. One email expressed concern that the design of the structure may diminish the historic surroundings. The NPS is also concerned about the issue and the EA addressed it in the Aesthetics section, indicating that the structure will add another non-historic element into the already impacted historic landscape. However, the structure will also add greatly to the understanding of the historic landscape by reconnecting Fort Vancouver to the waterfront. The height of the bridge above the surrounding landscape would give visitors an excellent panoramic view of the Fort and its relationship to the Columbia River. Near each end of the land bridge, widened overlooks would be provided along with wayside interpretive exhibits. Unlike a typical caged pedestrian bridge over a freeway, the proposed land bridge would be a graceful structure that incorporates a meandering path, extensive landscaping, view points for interpretation, and low level lighting. Another email expressed concern over the potential for objects being thrown of the bridge. The design includes an overhead trellis, fencing, and landscaping that would discourage throwing objects, however there is no way, barring a caged overcrossing, from completely stopping it.

Another letter was received from the State of Hawaii, Office of Hawaiian Affairs requesting assurance that "should iwi (human skeletal remains) or Native Hawaiian cultural or traditional deposits be found during ground disturbance, work will cease, and the appropriate agencies will be contacted pursuant to applicable law." The NPS will honor that request. In addition, a letter was received from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe expressing surprise and disappointment that the Archeological Report and to a lesser extent the EA included site information about archeological resources. The NPS responded to the Cowlitz tribe with a letter describing the limited circulation of the archeological report and the reasons for reporting limited archeological survey results in the EA. The NPS does not attempt to hide the archeological resources at Fort Vancouver NHS, rather to educate the public about the resources and promote stewardship. In addition, it is a difficult task to provide sufficient information to assure decision makers, tribes, and the public that the NPS is aware of archeological resources at the site and is taking measures for protection while also protecting that information. The NPS takes the comments seriously and will work harder in the future to ensure that the location of archeological resources is protected from public disclosure.

Consultation is on-going or completed with the following agencies:

Washington State Historic Preservation Officer

The NPS will continue to coordinate with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office as part of the environmental compliance effort, as outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the NPS and the SHPO regarding the project, signed July 26, 2005. The MOA stipulates the procedures for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. The MOA evidences the park's compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and shall govern the undertaking (36 CFR 800.6). The MOA establishes the procedures for conducting further efforts to inventory archeological resources, requirements for Native American consultation, procedures for consultation with the SHPO, procedures for development of strategies to avoid and protect resources, and reporting and monitoring requirements.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/ National Marine Fisheries Service

The endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.) requires federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that actions authorized, funded or carried out by the agency do not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. The NPS prepared letters of no effect for this project that were submitted with the EA to the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The agencies presented no objections to the finding of "no effect" to listed species (July 2005, Dan Guy [NMFS] and Marc Whisler [USFWS] via email).

State of Washington, Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program,

The Project Team will consult with the State of Washington, Department of Ecology, and Water Quality Program to ensure compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (see Resource Protection Measures). Because the construction site likely drains to the Columbia River and releases could impact water quality, this project will likely include a permit under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II requirements. The State of Washington, Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program, is delegated by the U.S. EPA as the state water pollution control agency, responsible for implementing federal and state water pollution control laws and regulations. The design team or construction contractor will prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and submit it for approval.

Non-impairment of Park Resources

Based on the impacts resulting from the selected alternative that are documented in the environmental assessment and summarized above, there will be no major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the Park's General Management Plan or other relevant NPS planning documents. Consequently, the selected alternative will not result in impairment of resources or values.

Conclusion

On the basis of the information contained in the environmental assessment as summarized above, it is the determination of the National Park Service that the selected alternative is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The environmental analysis, combined with the ability of the mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate impacts and given due consideration of the nature of public and agency comments, lead to this determination. Nor is the proposed action without precedent or similar to one which normally requires an environmental impact statement. Therefore, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. Construction of the Project may, therefore, be implemented as soon as practicable.

Recommended by: signed August 24, 2005

Tracy Fortmann Date

Superintendent, Fort Vancouver NHS

Approved: signed September 1, 2005

Jonathan B. Jarvis Date

Director, Pacific West Region